











"I WAS THERE"

WITH THE YANKS ON THE WESTERN FRONT 1917–1919

BY

C. LEROY BALDRIDGE

PVT. A. E. F.

TOGETHER WITH VERSES

BY

HILMAR R. BAUKHAGE

PVT. A. E. F.

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BY
C. LEROY BALDRIDGE

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TO OUR MOTHERS

Ours the Great Adventure, Yours the pain to bear, Ours the golden service stripes, Yours the marks of care.

If all the Great Adventure
The old Earth ever knew,
Was ours and in this little book
'Twould still belong to you!



These Sketches

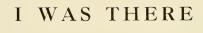
were made during a years service as a camion driver with the French army in the Chemin-des. Dames sector and a years service with the A.E.F. as an infantry private on special duty with "The Stars and StripEs," the official A.E.F. newspaper. Most of them were drawn at odd minutes during the French push of 1917 near Fort Malmaison, at loading parks and along the road side while on truck convoy, and while on special permission to draw and paint with the French army given me by the Grand quartier General during the time I was stationed at Joissons. The rest were drawn on American fronts from the Argonne to Belgium as my duties took me from one offensive to another.

It has been a keen regret to me that my artistic skill has been so imagnal to these opportunities. The sketches do not sufficiently show war for the stupid horror I know it to be.

I hope however they may serve as a record of doughboy types, of the people he lived with in France, with whom he suffered and by who se side he fought.

Many appeared first in "The stars and Stripes," "Lesties" "Weekly" and "Scribners Magazine, through the courtesy of whose editors I am now enabled to reprint them.

GEREN Baldridge Private, Am. E.F.











THE LINE

Form a line!
Get in line!
From the time that I enlisted
And since Jerry armististed
I've been standing, kidding, cussing,
I've been waiting, fuming, fussing,
In a line.

I have stood in line in mud and slime and sleet,
With the dirty water oozing from my feet,
I have soaked and slid and slipped,
While my tacky slicker dripped,
And I wondered what they'd hand me out to eat.

Get in line!
For supplies and for inspections,
With the dust in four directions,
For a chance to scrub the dirt off,
In the winter with my shirt off,
In a line.

I have sweated in an August training camp,
That would make a prohibition town look damp,
Underneath my dinky cap
While the sun burned off my map
And I waited for some gold-fish (and a cramp!).

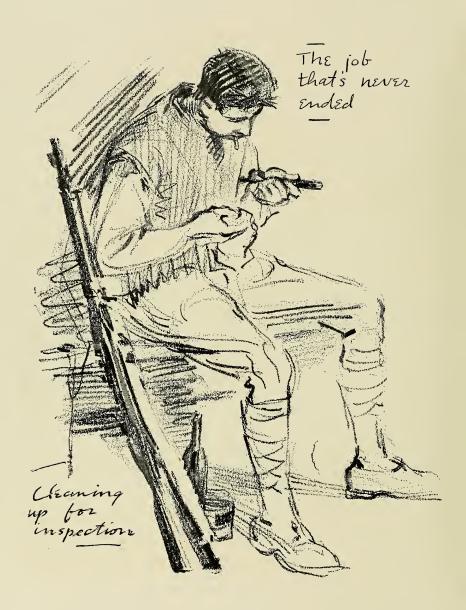
Get in line!
For rice, pay-day, pills, and ration,
For corned-willy, army fashion,
In Hoboken, in the trenches,
In a station with the Frenchies,
In a line.

I've been standing, freezing, sweating, Pushing, shoving, wheezing, fretting, And I won't be soon forgetting Though I don't say I'm regretting That I stood there, with my buddies, In a line.



The lids WE WEAR = The tim led With the to the







Montmernil



The letter from home







"PREPARE FOR ACTION"

I ran into Johnny Redlegs
A-sitting on his bus,
And I asked him why the devil
He dropped half his shells on us.
He just smiles and puffs his corn-cob,
As peaceful as a Persian,
And, "Buddy," says he, "you can't blame me,
You gotta blame dispersion."

I says to Johnny Redlegs,

"If I didn't have nine lives
Your barrage would have got me
With those lousy seventy-fives."
He grins and puffs his corn-cob,
And then he winks, reflective,
And, "Buddy," says he, "you can't blame me
If you pass your damn objective."

I says to Johnny Redlegs
(Just kidding him, you know),
"The trouble with your popgun is
She pops too gol-darned slow."
Then Redlegs drops his corn-cob
And spits on both his han's,
And, "Buddy," says he, "you can kid with me
And the whole damned Field Artilleree,
But there'll be a dud where you used to be
If you kid my swasont-cans!"



"I know a gurl at home who looks just like you





The Bugs -Two men , French style tanks









Reading their Shr. ts





American and French field artillery gun crews camped together in a word near classeny. The canvas overhead keeps the firs from being observed by aeroplanes at night.









RELIEF

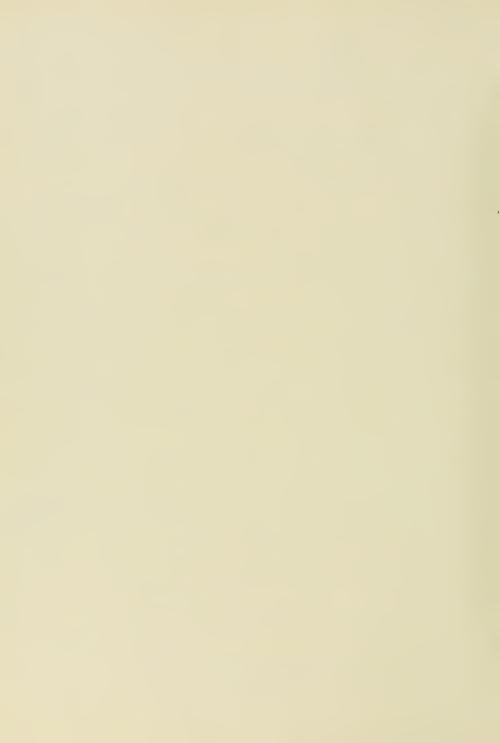
z-z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z-z-e-e-e-e-E-E - - - - - - b Boom!
There's another!
God, this pack is heavy.
Glad I pinched the extra willy,
Guess I'll need it.
And the sweater, too,
out there.

z-z-z-z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z-E-E-E-e-e- - - - - b Boom! There's another! Over!

Well, if one has my name on it
Then the guv'ment pays ten thousand.
What's the use? I couldn't spend it.
Leastways not—
out there.

out there?







The roofs of Vaux str. of your wantes of your





The shell hole Central





The noncombatant-





will advance close believed the bursting shells of a heavy barrage which, lifting, will leave them bace to bace with garman

machine guns.





FATIGUE

You can see 'em in the movies, With the sunlight on their guns, You can read in all the papers Of the charge that licked the Huns, You can read of "khaki heroes" And of "gleaming bayonet," But there's one thing that the writers And the artist all forget:

> That's me! On K. P.

In my suit of denim blue
I am thinking — not of you —
But the places where I'd like the top to be!

On the posters in the windows, In the monthly magazine, Are the boys in leather leggins Such as Pershing's never seen; Oh, they love to paint 'em pretty, All dressed up and fit to kiss, — Ain't it funny there's a picture That they always seem to miss?

Bless me soul,
Loading coal!
In my little shimmy-shirt,
Eyes and mouth full up with dirt —
(In the next war I'll be living at the Pole.)







"Steady, buddy!"









In an abri warting for the "gothas" (big grunan planes) to go home











The End of his service



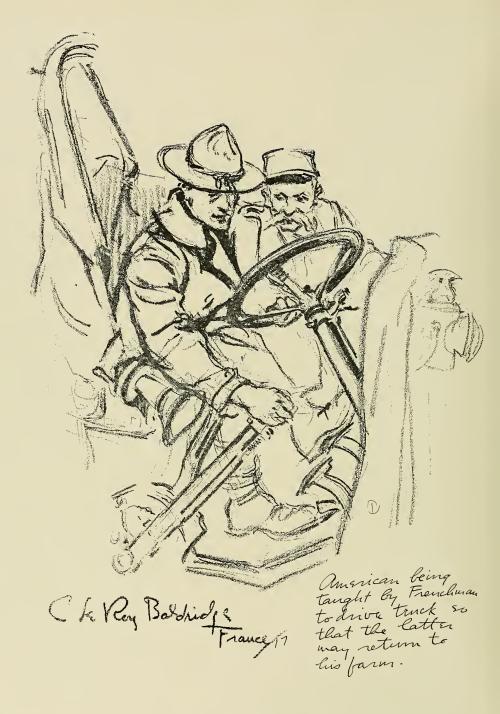
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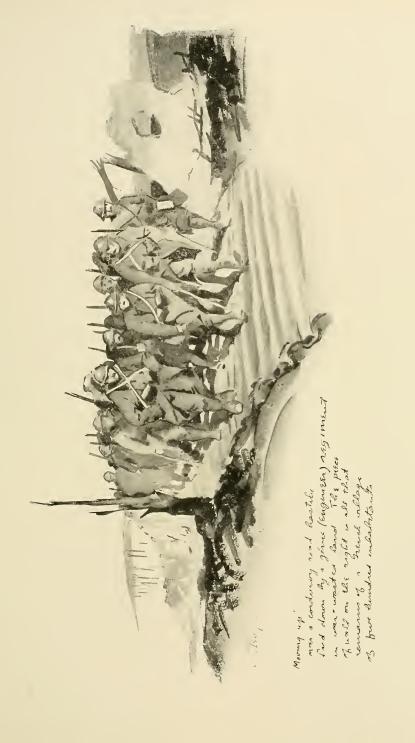
When we left the transport
Back in St. Nazaire,
Second thing you asked us,—
"Quand finit la guerre?"
Didn't know your lingo
You weren't hard to get,
Peace was what you wanted—
And a cigarette.

Then up in the trenches
It was just the same,
"When's it going to finish?"
Didn't seem quite game.
Then we saw you strafing,
Saw we had you wrong,
Wondered how you stood it
Four years long.

Drank your sour pinard,
Shared what smokes we had,
Got to know you better,
Found you weren't so bad,
Four years in the trenches!
(One's enough, I'll say)
How the hell'd you do it
On five sous a day?



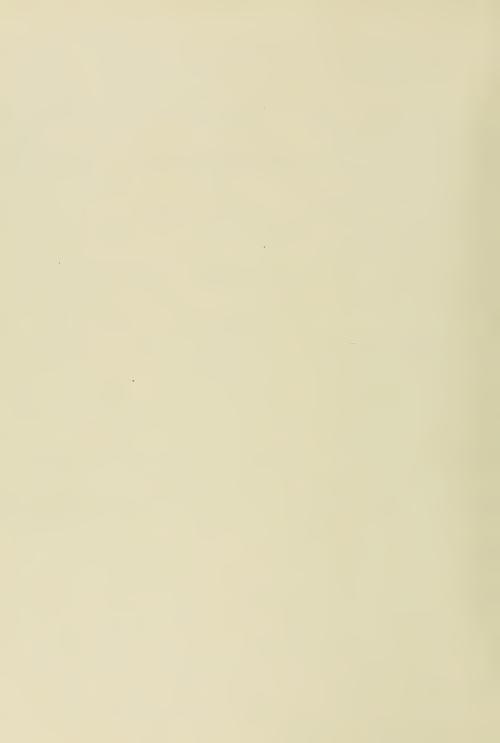








€ LE Ry Baldridge Vailly 1917













un grand bless : a wounded Chassem Fritzwho has the next cot. They got the same treatment and writher seems to mind the proximity

Menur Baldwigi 17



An American ambrilance at a poste de secours (fust aid sinion) Ostel - 1917



An old trench in the Argonne near Montbancon



THAT QUIET SECTOR

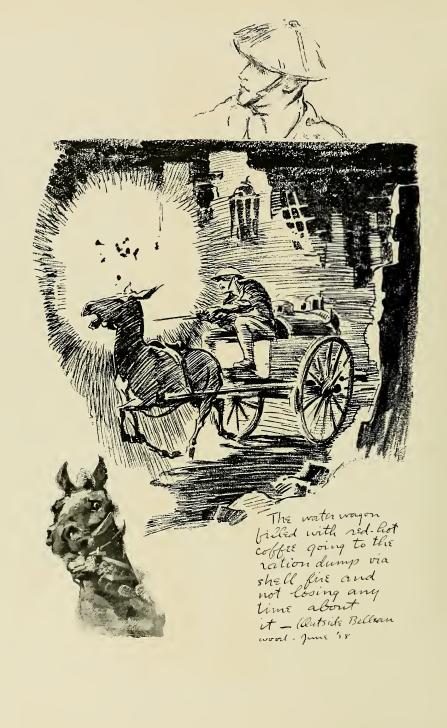
Four hours off — two hours on — And not a thing to do but think, And watch the mud and twisted wire And never let your peepers blink.

Two hours on — four hours off — The dug-out's slimy as the trench; It stinks of leather, men, and smoke, — You wake up dopey from the stench.

Four hours off — two hours on — Back on the same old trick again, The same old noth'n' to do at all From yesterday till God knows when. On post or not it's just the same, The waiting is what gets your goat And makes you want to chuck the game Or risk a trench-knife in your throat.

The ghosts we leave — do they stand guard?











After the German Beaut Seaming up old gravery used by fritz us a farracks - Chemin. des. Chams









No one knows where the poils slong word "Pinand" came from, but everyone knows what it means. It's half way between water and red wine, with the kick mostly in the taste. It is served as an army ration. The poils canteen is always bull of it.













Caught by a star shell at a listening post, and attempting to "freeze" like a restlest with the lumitar upon time, to look as much like a lump of much as possedly until the glass dies down.





Anvicano grantened in the mediacoal







A youk going on ever having a midnight cup of "vin rouge" in a compactment of a Bermissionnaus
Train - with a soisante-quings gunner, a sailor from a submarine, a Characeur, an aviation sergeant and several infuntrymen. For the next ten days of "permission" these men can forget war.





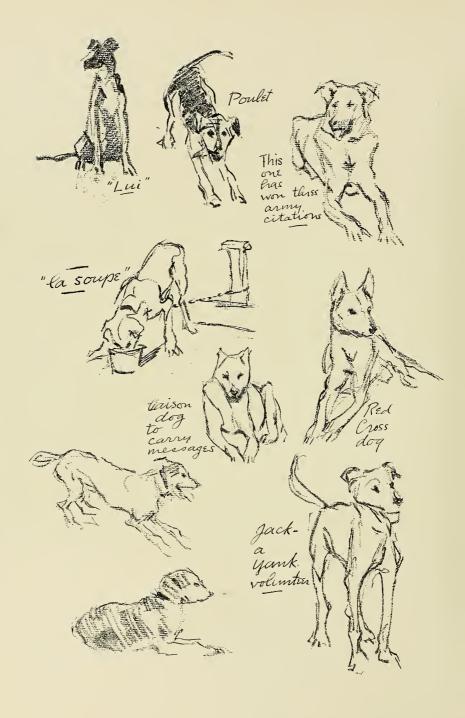


Baldridge

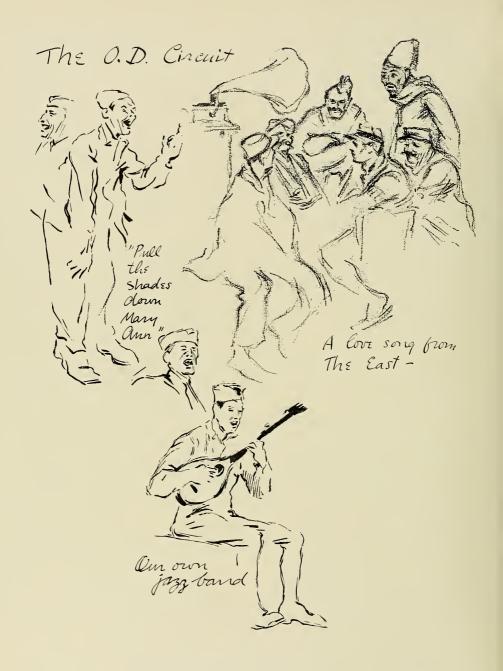




This is the cellar of her home. The hours above in longer exists For her living the washes clother for the soldiers the laughter with two young children is a prisoner in Belgium. A third grand child lives in this care



French dogs Coaned by private families and trained by the army for use as Red Cross aids, sentinels, and message carriers. Intelligence the only qualification - any breed goes Said Kénavo Sultane "Mort pour la Patrie"













SALVAGE

I'll be stepping wide in these russet shoes!
Leather putts beside, honest I can't lose!
Guess the guy that had 'em left 'em in a hurry!
What the hell, he's S. O. L.
I should worry.

"That's my second razor!"
"Then gimme the blades."
"Whatcha got there, Buddy?"
"Pair of tailor-mades!"

I'll be walking on air! Yes... they was the top's! He won't need 'em out there — if a big one drops.

"Going to keep that sweater?"
"No, look at the dirt."
"Put that on you, Buddy,
"You'll have to read your shirt!"

If I get that leave I can use 'em to dance. Well, I should grieve, —he had his chance.

"Nothing doing! Beat it!
"Saw that luger first!"
"Ten francs says I want it."
"Done. I'll cure this thirst."

Brand-new russet shoes, I'll be stepping high!
Someone's got to lose, glad I ain't the guy.
If I'm going to use 'em, guess I'll have to hurry,
The next H. E. may be meant for me—
I should worry!







Lafayette Escadulle Men Marius - who helps Karp the planes Pilot order . Loupout France Alov-17 abserver Che Roy Baldids



Making Froms from Brushwood at Antibes for use on army roads.

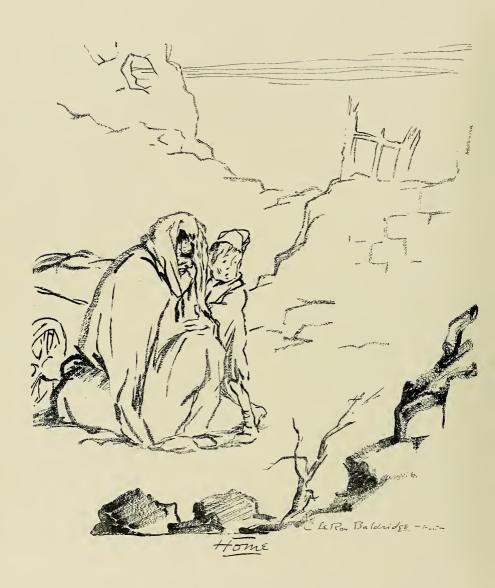




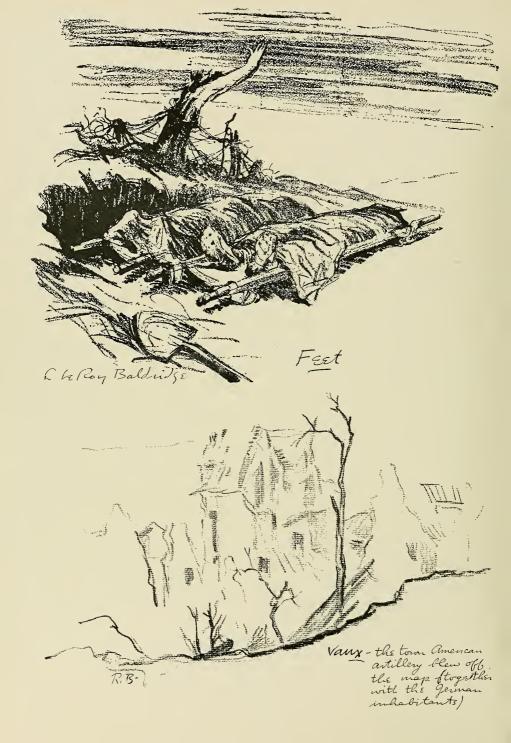
The gold star

























EQUIPMENT C

The Loot is getting wabbly, With his dinky little pack,— He can hear the sergeant cussing But he doesn't dare look back.

But we ain't saying nothing Since we got the order "route," Too dog-dead for even wond'ring If we'll ever hear "fall out."

My damn rifle and my helmet Keep on getting in the way, And my brains are numb and dopey Try'n' to cuss and try'n' to pray.

My throat's as dry as sawdust And my right arm's gone to sleep, And the pack-strap on my shoulder Cuts a slit two inches deep.

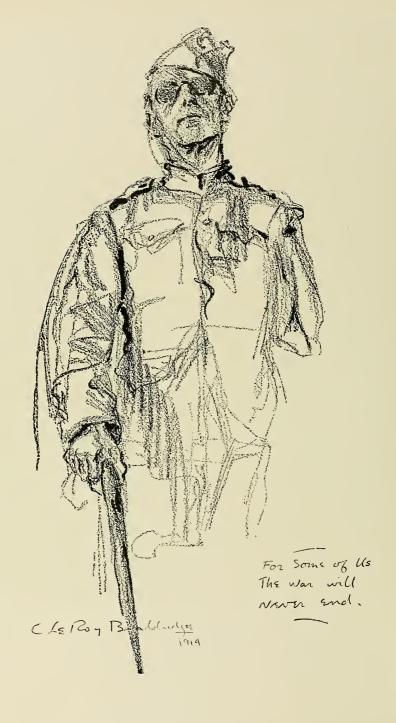
I just lift one foot and shove it And it hits most any place, Then I lift and shove the other T'keep from falling on my face.

If the guide should change the cadence I'll be damned if I could stop; If you pushed me with a feather — Well, I'd just curl up and drop.

And I know damn well there's stragglers That'll ride up on a truck — Guess if you ain't born a quitter, You're just simply outa luck.

I suppose we'll keep on going —
Huh? The Skipper's faced about?
Halt!... I'm dreaming... in the daisies...
You don't need... to say... "fall out!"







Of Roy Baldidge Soissons - 1917

In an ald Roman cellar two floors underground where civilians went during air raids as bombing planes passed over on their way to complience, Paris, and interior cities. This "care" was considered absolutely safe, but in Retober. 1918 was completely demoliched by one "155" sale Ce.



Mers and distribution of mail at the "non-com" school for the M. T. C. at Longport

Childy Baldridge 1917



Far from Brondina













The town of Cuffies (sun Aisne) held by the germans till 1916. When the old inhab. itants began moving back in; they were assisted in resetablishing their eife there by the American Red Cross

The site of the Rome of Madam Crépin where the Ped Cross set up a banack cottage for her.





The glory of Reims Rems. Nov. 1918



Cut off from rations for three days in the wood - with one can of tomatoes for both bood and drink-



A sixteen year old volimten



"MADELON"

- It seemed years since I had seen one, Years of hiking, sweat and blood, Didn't think there was a clean one In these miles of men and mud.
- Well, I stood there, laughing, drinking, Kidding her in bon fransay But the things that I was thinking Were a thousand miles away.
- Sewed my stripe on like a mother, Gee! She was a pretty kid.... But I left her like a brother,— Shake her hand was all I did.
- Then I says: "Vous, all right, cherry —"
 And my throat stuck, and it hurt....
 And I showed her what I carry
 In the pocket of my shirt.











Troops coming thom from
Marsells yo by way of the a
and stop to work at Wren
Here the dony hoor nexts the
hench trub soider with whom
he fought sule by rich at
Soisions -



France 1919 Ready to 90 Home



general Colonal Societary - The President-Bliss House Lansing M. Clemencian 1/2 Balforn





NOVEMBER ELEVENTH

We stood up and we didn't say a word, It felt just like when you have dropped your pack After a hike, and straightened out your back And seem just twice as light as any bird.

We stood up straight and, God! but it was good! When you have crouched like that for months, to stand Straight up and look right out toward No-Man's-Land And feel the way you never thought you could.

We saw the trenches on the other side And Jerry, too, not making any fuss, But prob'ly stupid-happy, just like us. Nobody shot and no one tried to hide.

If you had listened then I guess you'd heard A sort of sigh from everybody there, But all we did was stand and stare and stare, Just stare and stand and never say a word.

